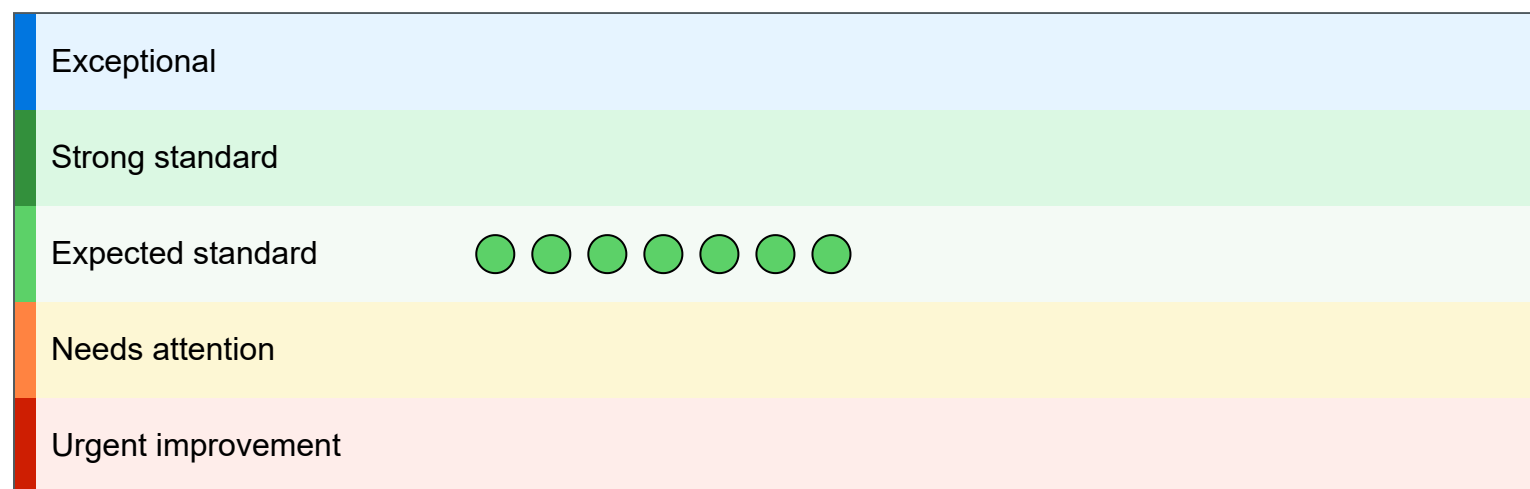


# Ashcroft Infants' School

Address: Mildenhall, Off Wigginton Road, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B79 8RU

Unique reference number (URN): 124147

## Inspection report: 3 February 2026



### ✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

#### **How we evaluate safeguarding**

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

## Expected standard

### Achievement

Expected standard 

Most pupils learn and remember well across the curriculum. For example, in geography, they can recall the seven continents of the world. Pupils make progress from their starting points. In the main, leaders ensure pupils secure the key foundations in English and mathematics before moving on. Pupils usually secure this important knowledge over time and are well prepared for junior school. However, some older pupils have weaknesses in spelling, which limits their ability to write with accuracy and fluency.

Despite a dip in the Year 1 phonics screening check results in 2025, over time, pupils generally achieve well in phonics. If they do not pass the check in Year 1, they nearly always pass it by the end of Year 2. The majority of current pupils are now achieving well in phonics. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those who are known or previously known to social care make positive progress from their starting points. These pupils achieve well over time.

### Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils' attendance has improved a great deal in recent years and is now above the national average. All pupils, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, attend well. Pupils arrive at school on time. The school works closely and sensitively with parents and carers to promote good attendance. This includes the checks that the school makes on pupils when they miss school.

Pupils behave well. They know the rules and aspire to be 'put on the rainbow'. This signals to them they have behaved positively. If difficulties occur, pupils know to report these things to staff. Pupils are confident that staff will sort things out. Pupils are kind and polite. They show courtesy to visitors. Pupils learn that bullying is not tolerated and that respect for all is important. Generally, staff promote high expectations and positive behaviour well. This helps pupils to focus on their learning in class. When pupils struggle with their behaviour, leaders put support in place to help them improve. This helps make the school a happy place, where pupils arrive eager to work and play together positively.

### Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a curriculum that places pupils' needs at its core. It is broad and balanced. The school makes sure pupils get a secure start in early reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for junior school. With the move to mixed-age classes in key stage 1, leaders have ensured the curriculum is organised so that pupils in each year group can build their knowledge securely and in a logical order.

Teachers focus on the essential building blocks of learning. As a result, most pupils grow in confidence and become more fluent readers, writers and mathematicians. However, some older pupils are not supported well enough to gain the key knowledge they need in spelling.

Leaders have strengthened the school's phonics programme. Staff have received appropriate training. However, not all staff deliver the programme with the consistency expected. Staff use assessment effectively. For example, they identify letters that pupils are not forming accurately, teach them the correct formation then give them chances to practise.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are a real focus for staff in lessons. Staff ensure that they provide pupils with opportunities to focus on targets from their support plans. This enables them to learn well over time.

## Early years

Expected standard 

The early years is a hive of activity. Leaders ensure that the 7 areas of learning are well-considered and developed over time. Children actively engage in learning activities that take place both indoors and outdoors. These activities reinforce effectively what adults have previously taught. Staff ensure that children's physical development is a focus. For example, children learn how to manipulate play dough and beads, which prepares them to hold a pencil.

Staff develop children's learning through positive interactions. They ensure that children develop their language skills. For example, children learn words such as 'obstacle' and 'wandering'. Children then use these words in their role play. Children learn about sounds in words from nursery. This prepares them well to develop their phonics skills in Reception. The school's new phonics system is being embedded. Staff are developing their confidence in delivering the programme as intended. Overall, children learn letter sounds and use this knowledge to read and write words well.

Leaders establish effective links and communication with parents and carers. Parents feel that their children make a positive start to school life. By the end of Reception, children are well prepared for Year 1.

## Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders make sure that pupils who may need extra help are identified as early as possible. Staff in the early years build strong relationships with parents and carers. This helps them spot disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities quickly. Pupils receive timely and effective support. Staff use clear processes to identify what each pupil needs. They are skilled at reducing barriers to learning. Staff use pupils' support plans well. They check that pupils reach their goals and make steady progress. When pupils meet a target, leaders set new challenges to keep them moving forward. Pupils with more complex needs receive well-targeted care in the 'Rainbow room'.

Leaders build positive links with external professionals, including a local special school. Staff meet these professionals and act on their advice when working with pupils. Leaders understand the needs of disadvantaged families and pupils. Because of this, they provide support that helps most pupils make positive progress. Disadvantaged pupils grow in their personal and social development. This growth helps them start to close learning gaps with their peers.

## Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know their school well overall. They have identified the right priorities for improvement. For example, the implementation of the school's new phonics programme is having an impact. Leaders make the right decisions with the needs of pupils in mind. They are passionate about infant education. They know it is their job to lay the important foundations for learning so all pupils can further progress at junior school. Following the move to mixed-age classes in key stage 1, leaders have kept a clear focus on the effective delivery of English and mathematics. However, some subject leaders have not reviewed the impact of this change on their subjects, resulting in some inconsistencies in curriculum delivery.

Leaders focus staff's professional learning on school improvement priorities. Professional learning is evidence-informed and includes support provided by local English and mathematics specialist hubs.

Governors are highly committed. They ensure that all aspects of the school's work are effective. They regularly provide challenge to ensure the school continues to improve. Staff say that leaders support them well in all aspects of school life and are professional role models. Leaders reduce unnecessary workload. For example, changes in the school's marking policy have both reduced workload and improved practice.

Parents are extremely positive about all aspects of school life. One parental comment summed up the views of many when they stated, 'Staff ensure the children in their care have the best possible start to their time in education.'

## Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school promotes pupils' personal development and wellbeing effectively. Pupils learn to be respectful of others, including people from different cultures. Pupils understand the importance of treating different people fairly. They talk about assemblies that promote this message. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of fundamental British values, such as democracy. They enjoy opportunities to make decisions together by voting. Pupils know what is right and wrong. Staff reinforce this at every opportunity.

The school's personal, social, health and economic curriculum helps pupils understand how to live healthy lives and stay safe. Pupils understand the need to eat well and take regular exercise. Pupils know how to keep safe at home and in their community. For example, they explain what they have learned from 'Smartie the penguin' to keep themselves safe online. Pupils benefit from a curriculum that reflects local needs and their own experiences. Visitors from a range of organisations, such as the fire service, help with this.

Pupils look forward to the trips that help their academic and personal development. For example, they show excitement about overnight trips and the things they will experience. They learn about their local area and community through trips to places of historical interest, such as a nearby castle.

Pupils value the clubs on offer and take part in them with real interest. For example, they speak with enthusiasm about line dancing and the multi-sports club. The school keeps a

check on which pupils take part to ensure all are involved.

## **What it's like to be a pupil at this school**

Ashcroft Infants' School holds a special place in its community's heart. Community members comment that it feels like there is a 'warm hug as you walk through the door'. Leaders have high ambition for pupils. They aspire to the school's motto of 'providing the best start in school life for all children'. Overall, pupils rise to these high ambitions. Pupils, parents and carers love this small and caring infant school. One parent's comment was typical of many when they stated, 'Ashcroft welcomed my child with open arms.' This school prepares pupils well for junior school.

Pupils love school life and learning. Because of this, they are eager to be in school and attend well. Pupils generally achieve well. However, inconsistencies in teaching sometimes slow the progress that some pupils make.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. The school's core values of kindness, fairness, independence and resilience underpin all its work. Pupils develop a thirst to learn. They typically behave well in lessons and during social times. Pupils say, 'Bullying is not allowed.' They have faith that staff will sort out any issues if they should happen. Kind and caring staff ensure that they are safe, well cared for and make progress through the curriculum. They get to know pupils and their individual needs well. This enables them to reduce any barriers to learning they may have.

Leaders instil a sense of responsibility in pupils. Younger pupils soon take on responsibilities in class, such as being class monitors. Pupils embrace opportunities to lead across the school, such as being school councillors, playground leaders and 'eco warriors'. Pupils take these responsibilities seriously. For example, eco warriors take an active role in promoting recycling and encouraging pupils to walk to school to protect the environment.

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## **Next steps**

- Leaders should continue to provide training and support for staff so they implement the school's phonics programme consistently well, enabling pupils to become fluent readers.
- Leaders should further support subject leaders to understand how well pupils learn their subject and to help staff deliver the curriculum consistently across year groups.
- Leaders should ensure staff consistently focus on developing older pupils' writing skills so they use their spelling knowledge effectively when writing.

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## **About this inspection**

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Tania Phillips.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders during the inspection. The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school uses no alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the previous inspection. Pupils in key stage 1 are now taught in mixed-age classes.

Headteacher: Jayne Fellows

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**Lead inspector:**

Barry Yeardsley, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspector:**

Jonathan Moore, Ofsted Inspector

## Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 3 February 2026

## School and pupil context

### Total pupils

**119**

Below average

### What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

### **School capacity**

**170**

Below average

#### **What does this mean?**

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

### **Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)**

**8.40%**

Well below average

#### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

### **Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan**

**0.00%**

Well below average

#### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

### **Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

**10.08%**

Below average

#### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

## Location deprivation

### Below average

#### What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

## Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

### No resourced provision

#### What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

## Absence

### Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

| Year             | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2024/25 (2 term) | 3.8%        | 5.2%             | Below                          |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 4.4%        | 5.5%             | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 5.5%        | 5.9%             | Close to average               |

### Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

| Year             | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2024/25 (2 term) | 5.0%        | 13.3%            | Below                          |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 7.1%        | 14.6%            | Below                          |

| Year             | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 19.4%       | 16.2%            | Close to average               |

## Our grades explained

### Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

### Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

### Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

### Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

### Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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